

# City Director Films Life of Valentino

By TOM CAWLEY

As every schoolgirl who has been paying attention to her great-aunt's old fan magazines knows, Rudolph Valentino was the first of the red hot lovers to char the edges of American movie screens in the 1920s.

Those were the days when Hollywood dis-

covered sex was unbeatable as a saleable commodity at the box office.

If the shade of the late Valentino, who died in the middle of screaming female hysteria in 1925, fails to show up in ectoplasmic form in suburban Conklin Saturday night during a seance planned by an avant garde film com-

pany from Manhattan, don't blame the director, Michael Butler.

He is working hard at it, as is the spiritualist, Mrs. Mae York, and the trans-medium, Robert Chzran.

At 11 p.m. Saturday the spiritualist, the medium, the actors, the director and the cameraman will try to invoke the shade of the smouldering Latin who once curled your grandmother's hair with his cinematic lovemaking. There was a lot of panting, and nostril-widening.

**YOU MAY VERY** well ask why.

"The 1920s are my field," Butler explained. He is a thin, intense young man and can almost convince you he really believes the seance planned for Saturday night can produce Valentino.

The legend, which is an old Southern Tier folk tale, was begun in 1927 by the late Carol McKinstry. She was a spiritualist and she lived in a stone building known as "The Castle." It now is the Conklin Town Hall, five miles southeast of Binghamton.

The tale that intrigued Butler is that Mrs. McKinstry claimed Valentino's spirit visited her each night and dictated a movie scenario to her as she sat between her crystal ball and a lifesize likeness of Buddha. Its title was "The Warning Out of the Ages." The movie never made it to the screen, assiduously as Mrs. McKinstry tried to sell it.



**WHEN MAKEUP REALLY WAS MAKEUP**—The heavily stylistic treatment being given the Valentino saga—which will include a seance Saturday night—is laid on lavishly by the makeup man who caricatures bee-stung lips, a cloche head covering, and a pearl-and-fake-rose-bedecked hat for the servant. Parasol is collector's item.

**BUTLER**, a Binghamton boy who has been designing clothing and taking stabs at play-writing in New York the last few years, rounded up a company of professional and amateur actors and will be spending all summer and fall on a film treatment of Valentino's life. The seance is an episode in the scenario.

He wants to use the sequences he has been filming in and around Binghamton for the last week as a pilot to apply for New York State Council of Arts money to do the whole job for about \$10,000. So far he has been financing the shooting with his own money.

His company includes actresses who, in appropriate 1920s costumes and bee's-lips make-up, will take the parts of such old-time movie vamps as Pola Negri and Natasah Rambova, Valentino's last wife.

In the Conklin seance episode, Butler's researches has turned up Mrs. McKinstry's purple interviews with reporters of 1927.

**SHE SAID** Valentino's ghostly visits to her at "The Castle" had "led me through the mazes of a thrilling romance," and that he told a story of a "triangle of love and passion." Mrs. McKinstry was no understater.

It was in December, 1926, that Valentino's ghost first appeared before her, she said, describing it this way: "A light appeared and his spirit materialized before me." From then on it was two hours of literary collaboration a night until the script was finished. Then Valentino didn't come around any more.

If luck is with Butler & Co., he'll be back Saturday night.



—PRESS PHOTOS BY JOHN J. GUGLIELMI.  
**PASSION UNBRIDLED**—Valentino at his flaming, bug-eyed best on the silver screen, clutches Alice Terry in torrid scene of the 1920s.



# *Will the Love King Return to His Conklin Castle?*



**ALAS POOR RUDOLPH!**—Pola Negri, silent screen siren of the 1920s, knew him well. Here, on location in Binghamton filming a life of Rudolph Valentino, Billie-Marie Gross, play-

ing Negri, is shaded by parasol held aloft by servant played by Leah Hocking. Michael Butler, director, is at right, cameraman Brad Lemery at left.